



SMICRORNIS BREVIROSTRIS: *Gould.*

SMICRORNIS BREVIROSTRIS, *Gould.*

Short-billed Smicrornis.

Psilopus brevirostris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 147.

Geah-ter-but, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

UNTIL more information has been acquired respecting the members of this genus, I shall regard the species from Swan River and New South Wales as the same, although some trivial differences exist in the examples from those distant localities.

It is a constant inhabitant of the leafy branches of the *Eucalypti*, and resorts alike to those of a dwarf stature and those of the loftiest growth. While searching for insects, in which it is incessantly engaged, it displays all the scrutinizing habits of the *Pari* or Tits, clinging about the finest twigs of the outermost branches, prying underneath and above the leaves and among the flowers, uttering all the while or very frequently a low simple song. I found it abundant in every part of South Australia I visited, particularly in the neighbourhood of Adelaide and in the gulleys of the ranges skirting the belts of the Murray; in New South Wales it was frequently seen at Yarrundi, and other parts of the Upper Hunter district. Mr. Gilbert states that in Western Australia he only met with it in the York district, that it was always seen on the branches of trees, where it feeds on larvæ and small insects, that its flight was of very short duration, merely flitting from tree to tree, and that its note is a weak twitter, a good deal resembling that of the *Acanthiza chrysorrhæa*.

It breeds in September and the two following months, and forms a nest of the downy buds of plants, mixed with green moss, the cocoons of spiders, &c., all matted and bound together very firmly and closely with spiders' webs, and the inside lined at the bottom with feathers; it is globular in form, and is attached by the back part to an upright branch, with the entrance in the side, the upper part over the entrance being carried out to a point which shades the opening like the eaves of a house. The eggs are three in number, of a dull buff, marked with extremely fine freckles at the larger end; they are six and a half lines long by four and a half lines broad.

A narrow stripe of yellowish white passes from the bill over each eye; crown of the head brownish grey, passing into olive at the back of the neck; back, rump and upper tail-coverts olive, brightest on the latter; ear-coverts and sides of the face very pale reddish brown; throat and chest white tinged with olive, with a faint longitudinal mark of brown down the centre of each feather, the remainder of the under surface pale citron-yellow; two centre tail-feathers brown; the remainder brown at the base, the middle being crossed by a broad band of blackish brown, which is succeeded by a spot of white on the inner webs, the tips pale brown; feet blackish brown; irides pale straw-yellow; bill varying from fleshy white to ashy grey.

The figures represent the two sexes, which are similar in plumage, of the natural size.